

VETERANS JOURNAL



PUBLISHED BY
FRANKLIN COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE COMMISSION
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Spring 2010 Issue

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The information in this journal is being provided to make the veteran community aware of some current events, activities and veterans issues that are of mutual concern. From time to time, we will include some relevant information important enough to be repeated to insure that veterans and their families are aware of the full range of benefits and entitlements available to them.



Keeping your family's files current

Retired Soldiers and surviving spouses — does your family know where your files and important papers are? If you died tomorrow, would they know where your bank account is, what insurance you carried and where the deed to the house is? If you haven't yet put together a packet of information for your family, a good tool to use is our Casualty Assistance Checklist which you can access on our homepage at <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/rso/PosRetirement.asp> under Information for Retired Soldiers and Family Members. Complete the checklist and give it to your family to make things a little easier after your death.



If you need assistance filing your taxes, please call the county phone number 211.

President Signs Veterans Health Act

Week of December 28, 2009
President Barack Obama recently signed the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009 into law. The new law will provide timely, predictable funding for the Veterans Health Administration one-year ahead of the regular appropriations process. The text of the new law is available [online](#).

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h1016enr.txt.pdf

Bootcamp for Veterans Expands

Week of December 28, 2009
The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV) announced an expansion of its services to include veterans of the U.S. Coast Guard who have a service-connected disability as a result of their support of Operations Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom. The EBV program is designed to offer training in small business and entrepreneurship to post-9/11 military veterans with disabilities. The program was created by the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University in 2007. For more information, visit the [Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities \(EBV\) website](http://whitman.syr.edu/ebv/).
<http://whitman.syr.edu/ebv/>

VETERANS RESOURCES NETWORK

<http://www.valaw.org>
<http://38uscode.com>

(If you qualify you should go ahead and file your claim, or if your claim was denied? you should send a letter asking that your claim be reopened based on the presumption of exposure to agent orange. Editor, Ray B Davis Jr Veterans Resources network)

Costly Agent Orange-Heart Disease Link
Looms
Tom Philpott | December 31, 2009

The cost of war -- on veterans' health and taxpayer wallets -- will loom a little larger in the new year when the Department of Veterans Affairs issues a final rule to claim adjudicators to presume three more diseases of Vietnam veterans, including heart disease, were caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

The rule, expected to be published soon, will make almost any veteran who set foot in Vietnam, and is diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, B cell leukemia or ischemic heart disease (known also as coronary artery disease), eligible for disability compensation and VA medical care. The exception would be if credible evidence surfaces of a non-service cause for the ailment.

Katie Roberts, VA press secretary, said no estimates will be available on numbers of veterans impacted or the potential cost to VA until after the rule change takes effect sometime in 2010. But the National Association for Uniformed Services was told by a VA official that up to 185,000 veterans could become eligible for benefits and the projected cost to VA might reach \$50 billion, said Win Reither, a retired colonel on NAUS' executive board.

NAUS also advised members that VA, to avoid aggravating its claims backlog, intends to "accept letters from family physicians supporting claims for Agent Orange-related conditions." It said thousands of widows whose husbands died of Agent Orange disabilities also will be eligible for retroactive benefits and VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

"This is huge," said Ronald Abrams, co-director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program. NVLSP has represented veterans in Agent Orange lawsuits for the last 25 years. The non-profit law group publishes the "Veterans Benefits Manual," a 1900-page guide for veterans' advocates to navigate the maze for VA claims, appeals and key court decisions.

Abrams said he can't guess at how many more thousands of veterans previously denied disability claims, or how many thousands more who haven't filed claims yet, will be eligible for benefits. But numbers, particularly of those with heart disease, will be very large, he suggested.

All of the veterans "who have been trying to link their heart condition to a service-connected condition won't have to do it now if they're Vietnam vets," Abrams said. For VA, it will mean "a significant amount of money -- and many, many, many people helped."

The excitement over expansion of benefits for Vietnam veterans, and worry by some within the Obama administration over cost, flows from an announcement last October by VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. He said three categories would be added to the list of diseases the VA presumes were caused by Agent Orange. Veterans with the presumptive Agent Orange ailments can get disability compensation if they can show they made even a brief visit to Vietnam from 1962 to 1975. With a presumptive illness, claim applicants don't have to prove, as other claimants do, a direct association between their medical condition and military service.

Shinseki said he based his decision

on work of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies. VA contracts with IOM to gather veterans' health data and investigate links between diseases and toxic herbicide used in Vietnam to destroy vegetation and expose enemy positions.

In a speech last July, Shinseki, former Army chief of staff and a wounded veteran of Vietnam, expressed frustration that "40 years after Agent Orange was last used in Vietnam, this secretary is still adjudicating claims for presumption of service-connected disabilities tied to its toxic effects." VA and the Defense Department should have conducted conclusive studies earlier on presumptive disabilities from Agent Orange, he suggested.

"The scientific method and the failure to advocate for the veteran got in the way of our processes," Shinseki bluntly concluded.

In last October's announcement he said VA "must do better reviews of illnesses that may be connected to service, and we will. Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence."

When a disease is added to VA's list of ailments tied to Agent Orange, veterans with the disease can become eligible for retroactive disability payments, back to the date original claims were rejected, if after 1985.

Joe Violante, legislative director for Disabled American Veterans, praised Shinseki's decision. But he said VA faces a "logistical nightmare" in trying to find veterans turned down on earlier on claims. A VA official told Violante, he said, that cost of the search could be part of that nightmare.

Chairman of government affairs for Vietnam Veterans of America until last October was John Miterko. He said he wasn't surprised that Shinseki added ailments to the Agent Orange presumptive list including heart disease.

"If you look at the Vietnam veteran

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population, the diseases we've contracted and the mortality rate, the only group dying faster rate are the World War II veterans," Miterko said. "We're picking up diseases by our '60s that we shouldn't be getting until our late '70s, early '80s. So his adding other diseases, heart disease in particular isn't a surprise."

Both Shinseki and his predecessor, James Peake, former Army surgeon general, had long military careers and served in Vietnam. "That's a hell of a bonus for us," Miterko said. Both of them have shown "much more empathy, much more understanding. They would have seen many of their own peer group suffering from the effects of exposure to Agent Orange."

Miterko doesn't believe anyone can estimate how many veterans will benefit from the new presumptive diseases. VA will continue to process claims individually, he said, and likely won't be accepting Agent Orange as the cause of heart disease for someone "who has smoked for 40 years and is morbidly obese. Common sense is going to have to prevail as well."

To comment, send e-mail to milupdate@aol.com or write to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA, 20120-1111

<http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,208380,00.html>



Dear Ohio Motorist:

This is a friendly reminder about a change in Ohio driver license and vehicle registration law.

Starting Oct. 1, 2009, the BMV has been required to impose a \$20.00 late fee on all late driver license and vehicle registration renewals. There is a 7 day grace period associated with the late fee.

In order to avoid a late fee, remember to complete renewals before the expiration date, either in person, by mail or on-line at <http://www.OPLATES.com>. (Please be aware that mail and on-line registrations may take additional time). Please remember that driver licenses and vehicle registrations typically expire on the motorist's birthday, as some mistakenly believe the end of the month.

If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Registration Special Plates Section, P.O. Box 16521, Columbus, Ohio 43216-6521, call 1-800-589-8247, or email us at Registrar@dps.state.oh.us.

Armed Forces Licenses in Ohio

Week of December 28, 2009

Veterans and servicemembers now have the option of displaying the U.S. Armed Forces symbol on their driver license (DL) or state identification card (ID) through the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). There is no additional cost to have the symbol added, other than the normal fees associated with applying for or renewing a DL or ID. The Armed Forces symbol

can be added to the DL or ID at any Deputy Registrar. The applicant must submit a copy of his/her DD-214 displaying their military service or honorable discharge from the U.S. Armed Forces. For more information, visit the [Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles website](http://www.bmv.ohio.gov/).

<http://www.bmv.ohio.gov/> Use this link to get directly to the information http://www.bmv.ohio.gov/faq_Armed_forces.stm



Social Security Benefits Wounded Warriors

Week of December 28, 2009

The Social Security Administration (SSA) honors our nation's military personnel by offering expedited processing of disability claims from Social Security. Benefits available through Social Security differ from Department of Veterans Affairs administered benefits and require a separate application. If you, or someone you know, were wounded while on active duty in the military, find out more about what Social Security can do for you by visiting the [SSA Wounded Warrior website](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors/) <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors/>.

To learn more about Social Security for veterans, read a copy of the SSA publication, Military Service and Social Security. You can find it online at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10017.html or call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) to request a free copy.

**VETERANS JOURNAL
SPRING 2010**

PTSD Vets Win Retirement Deal Tom Philpott | January 28, 2010

PTSD Vets Discharged Since 2002 Win Retirement Deal

More than 4300 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans who were diagnosed in service as suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, but got low military disability ratings, have won an agreement with the Department of Defense to upgrade those ratings retroactively to 50 percent.

The higher rating will represent an important win for this group of veterans mentally scarred by war. It will mean, from date of discharge, eligibility for disability retirement and access to TRICARE, the military's triple health insurance option, for the veterans, spouses and dependent children.

Any out-of-pocket medical costs since discharge also could be paid retroactively, and these soon-to-be-designated disabled "retirees" will gain access to discounted shopping and recreational services on base.

Sparkling the agreement is a class action lawsuit brought by the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) which contends that the services illegally denied retiree status and medical benefits for years to these veterans who were diagnosed with PTSD then separated as unfit for service.

Service Physical Evaluation Boards (PEBs) would ignore the disability rating schedule used by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which requires a minimum 50-percent rating for

PTSD victims, and routinely separate their members with ratings as low as 10 percent.

A board decision that keeps ratings below 30 percent lowers personnel costs. Instead of immediate annuity and lifetime TRICARE coverage, veterans rated below 30 percent get only a lump sum severance pay.

Judge George W. Miller of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims agreed to stay a final ruling in the case of *Sabo, et al v. United States* after DoD agreed to cut a deal. Seven veterans were named as original plaintiffs in *Sabo* but the claims court expanded the scope of the lawsuit to a class action. Defense officials gave NVLSP the names of 4300 veterans who should be invited to apply to have their ratings reviewed and upgraded, but there could be more.

Misty Sabo, wife of former Army Sgt. Michael Sabo, an original plaintiffs, said she was "totally excited" to learn of the agreement this week. Five of their six children are disabled with bilateral cleft lip and palate, which creates hearing, dental and speech problems and requires multiple surgeries. Family medical bills, said Misty, are enormous.

Michael Sabo, 31, had served in the Army more than a decade when he was diagnosed with PTSD after two tours in Iraq where he routinely went on patrols that exposed him to multiple explosions and live enemy fire.

After Sabo's first 13-month tour in 2003-2004 he suffered recurring nightmares, severe

headaches and mood swings. In the middle of his second tour, which again exposed him to explosions, mortar attacks and small arms fire, he returned home on emergency leave to care for his children while Misty underwent surgery. While home, in Fountain, Colo., near Fort Carson, Sabo nightmares, severe headaches and violent mood swings intensified and, the lawsuit contends, "severely impacted him and his family."

He sought medical help and was diagnosed with PTSD and Post-Concussive Syndrome. In February 2008, the Army separated him as unfit with a 10-percent disability rating and a modest lump-sum severance.

Misty said she was stunned that the Army rating was only 10 percent for a condition that ended his career and changed his life so dramatically.

"He was just thrown to the wind," she said.

"I didn't care at the time," said Michael, in a brief phone interview.

"I kept telling him, 'This doesn't sound right that somebody would get hurt like you and not get a retirement,'" Misty said. "He said, 'Well, what do you want me to do, fight against the Army?' And I said, 'Yep.'"

At the urging of a local advocate for veterans in Fort Carson area, Sabo agreed to have his name added to the NVLSP lawsuit being prepared.

By October 2008, under pressure from Congress, DoD did revise its guidance to the services on rating PTSD to adhere to the VA rating schedule. Meanwhile, Congress ordered DoD to create a special board to review any service-generated disability ratings of 20 percent or less brought forth by veterans who were separated as medically unfit since Sept. 11, 2001.

Thousands have applied to this panel, called the Physical Disability Board of Review. So why bring a class action lawsuit specifically on behalf service members separated for PTSD?

Bart Stichman, co-executive director of NVLSP, said the deal with DoD forced by the court will expedite the rating review process for these PTSD cases upon application, and will guarantee those 4300-plus veterans a rating upgrade to 50-percent for at least six months. After that, the case will be reviewed again and the disability rating confirmed, increased or reduced.

A Class Action Opt-In Notice Form is being mailed to these veterans and must be returned either by fax or postmarked before July 24, 2010. Veterans who don't get a notice by mail but believe they might be eligible can get more information online at: www.ptsdlawsuit.com.

The deal will not benefit tens of thousands of veterans diagnosed with PTSD over the last 30 years, only those discharged with a rating for PTSD of less than 50 percent after Dec. 17, 2002, and before Oct. 14, 2008.

As the dates indicate, the deal doesn't include even all PTSD veterans discharged since Sept. 11, 2001. That's because the lawsuit was brought under the Tucker Act, which has a six-year statute of limitation from the date a complaint is filed against the government, which was in December 2008.

Misty said a doctor at Fort Carson finally prescribed proper medication for Michael after some terrible times. Though he is able to work, every day remains a struggle due to memory loss, headaches and nightmares.

"It's very hard for him, and us, because he has no memory," said Misty. "Yesterday was our daughter's birthday. He totally forgot. He doesn't like to be around people, which makes it really hard with a big family...And he does not sleep because of the nightmares."

"I have heart disease," she said, "and just before he was discharged I found out I have MS [multiple sclerosis]. So I've been without my thyroid pills or any medical care." When the family qualifies again for TRICARE, she said, "I can start taking better care of myself to take care of my children."

To comment, send e-mail to milupdate@aol.com or write to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA, 20120-1111 or visit www.militaryupdate.com/.

Wednesday, February 24, 2010
FOX NEWS



Courtesy: www.michaelyon-online.com

Ret. Colonel Robert L Howard

One of the nation's most highly decorated veterans was being laid to rest on Wednesday.

Ret. Colonel Robert L Howard, a Medal of Honor recipient who was awarded eight Purple Hearts for his service in the Vietnam War, was to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va.

Howard, who died on Dec. 23, was 70.

Howard was wounded 14 times during 54 months of combat duty — five tours — in Vietnam. He retired from the Army as a full colonel in 2006 after 36 years in the U.S. military — including more than 33 years on airborne status.

He was hailed as one of the nation's most heroic soldiers — and the most highly decorated soldier since World War II.

According to a biographical sketch issued by the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne), Howard also participated in two movies starring John Wayne, making a parachute jump in "The Longest Day" and appearing as an airborne instructor in "The Green Berets."

President Richard Nixon presented the Medal of Honor to him on March 2, 1971.



February 4, 2010

VA VOWS TO IMPROVE TRACKING OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA CARE FOLLOWING INSPECTOR GENERAL FINDINGS

Report requested by Akaka finds insufficient monitoring of whether veterans are charged for care that should be free

WASHINGTON, D.C. – An Inspector General investigation requested by Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI) found that the Department of Veterans Affairs is unable to sufficiently monitor whether veterans are being wrongly charged for care related to military sexual trauma. Last year, Akaka [requested](#) an investigation after being contacted by a veteran who was being inappropriately charged for care at a VA facility in Texas.

Under existing law, veterans are [entitled](#) to free VA treatment for conditions related to military sexual trauma. In response to the investigation, VA leadership committed to changing monitoring across the VA health care system so potential billing errors can be corrected.

"I am concerned that some veterans may still be charged for care they should receive for free, unnecessarily adding complications to the recovery process" said Akaka.

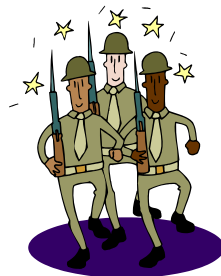
"However, I am pleased that VA's leadership is ordering changes system-wide as the Inspector General recommended. I will continue to monitor this issue."

Senator Akaka also thanked the veteran who initially contacted him to share evidence of this problem last year. *"If she had not stood up for her fellow veterans, these national changes would not be in*

the works. Once again, this veteran has served her country well."

"Our liberties, our values, all for which America stands is safe today because brave men and women have been ready to face the fire at freedom's front. And we thank God for them."

~ Ronald Reagan ~



The 2010 Central Ohio Armed Forces Day Observance

Will be sponsored by

The Military/Veterans Educational Foundation (MILVETS)

Mark your calendars for Friday, May 14, 2010 at Villa Milano Restaurant



The Pickerington American Post 283 will have the Honor of hosting the Vietnam Travelling Memorial Wall November 9, 2010 to November 15, 2010.

The ceremony opening the public visitation will be on the 10th of November. We of post 283 would be pleased if you would be in attendance for the day in honor of those fallen for our country and those defending now.

Should you have any questions please contact me at the following—740-862-0217 or lpauley@insight.rr.com

Graduate School Possible with Post 9/11 GI Bill

A provision included in the Post-9/11 GI Bill covers graduate-level education. The Yellow Ribbon GI Enhancement Program allows Post-9/11 GI Bill-eligible service members to attend a participating private, graduate or out-of state-university without having to pay the difference not covered by the bill. Participating schools voluntarily enter into an agreement with VA to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition. The Yellow Ribbon program falls under the same guidelines as the Post-9/11 GI Bill. For more information about the Yellow Ribbon G.I. Enhancement Program, visit the VA [Yellow Ribbon Program webpage](#)

VETERANS JOURNAL

Ohioans question Veterans Affairs head Disability benefits big topic at meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2010
3:19 AM

By [Jeb Phillips](#)

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH



Eric Shinseki said he hopes frustrated veterans will see that his department can change for the better.

DispatchPolitics

CHILLICOTHE, Ohio -- Ohio veterans have complained for years about the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs -- how long it takes to get disability benefits, for example, or how Ohio veterans seem to get less than veterans from other states.

Or how claims for benefits get rejected for questionable reasons.

Yesterday, a few Ohio veterans got a chance to talk to a person who can do something about that.

Eric Shinseki, secretary of veterans affairs, took a brief tour of federal stimulus projects at Chillicothe's VA Medical Center, including the renovation of a therapeutic exercise gym. Then he participated in a discussion at Ohio University's Chillicothe campus with members of a veterans group that advises U.S. Rep. Zack Space.

Shinseki began with a joke about the weather:

"As someone who grew up in Hawaii, this is a challenging part of the country," he said.

From that point on, the conversation turned to business.

Space, a Democrat from Dover, acted as a kind of master of ceremonies. He discussed the difficulty that the Department of Veterans Affairs has reaching veterans in rural areas.

Neil Miller, president of the Ross County Veterans Council, talked about the "black hole" that applications for disability benefits seem to disappear into.

There was a question about the progress in addressing how little disability money Ohio's veterans get compared with veterans in other states. A 2006 study found that the average Ohio veteran received less money than veterans in any other state except Indiana.

Another person asked about the different measures that the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs use to decide the extent of a veteran's disability.

Shinseki said that the backlog of applications for disability benefits is his first priority. The number of disability claims waiting for a decision hovers around 1 million, according to government statistics.

Four test programs in different parts of the country should help, he said. Each takes a different element -- one is trying to streamline paperwork and another studies creating "virtual"

regional Veterans Affairs offices -- with the hope of making the claims process more efficient.

Shinseki said that, for now, only about 8 million of the country's 23 million veterans are enrolled in the department. A new program that automatically creates a Veterans Affairs file for everyone who becomes a member of the military will improve those statistics, he said.

And the Veterans Affairs regional office in Cleveland, which processes almost all of Ohio veterans' disability claims, is working to address the discrepancies between Ohio and other states, said Joyce Cange, the office's director, who discussed the issue during the meeting.

That 2006 study used decades' worth of data, and it's difficult to make a dent in that much data over a year or two, she said.

But new quality-control measures and online training are helping Ohio to become consistent with the rest of the country, Cange said.

After the discussion, Shinseki said he hoped that frustrated veterans, those who have given up on Veterans Affairs, will see that his department can change for the better.

"Give us another shot," he said.

jeb.phillips@dispatch.com

SPRING



Charitable Pharmacy
of Central Ohio, Inc.

Basic Fact Sheet

We can help you...

- Get free medicine (if we have it)
- Find a doctor
- Find other places that can help you

We can help you if...

- You live in Franklin County, OH; and
- You make less than \$21,660 (for one person), \$29,140 (for two people). Add
- \$7,480 more for each extra family member.

Bring with you...

- Proof that you live in Franklin County.
- This can be a lease or utility bill.
- Proof of the money you make.
- This can be a pay stub or bank statement.
- If you cannot bring these things, get a reference letter from a social service agency.
- Your original prescriptions.

We are at...Livingston United Methodist Church, 200 E. Livingston Ave.

We are open...

- Mondays: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Wednesdays: 12 – 4 p.m.
- Fridays: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Talk to us...

- Email: charitablepharmacy@gmail.com;
- Phone: 614-227-0301

The US Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs are pleased to introduce the re-designed and enhanced National Resource Directory Web site,

www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov.

Created for Wounded Warriors, Veterans and their families and caregivers, the new National Resource Directory has proved to be a useful tool for service providers who support the military and Veterans communities. The National Resource Directory provides access to over 10,000 services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. We are proud to assure our users they can trust the content as resources are reviewed regularly by a content management team that includes several Veterans and subject matter experts.

A few features of the new Web site include a faster, more robust search engine; a Bookmark & Share capability for use with social media tools; and an "In the News" feature that provides links to news and updates about Wounded Warrior and Veterans issues.

Also included on the site is an expanded Homeless Assistance section where users can find information on a variety of programs and benefits.. We need your assistance in promoting the National Resource Directory. Here are some ways to help us spread the word:

- Establish a link to www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov on your organization's Web site. (The Web site includes instructions for posting a linked logo. Check out the "Link to Us" button in the Stay Connected box on the home page.)
- Publish a news brief or article about the National Resource Directory in your newsletters and other publications. (Attached is a

ready-to-publish drop-in article for your use - feel free to edit it as needed.)

- Send an e-mail about the National Resource Directory to your co-workers, members and/or other stakeholders and encourage them to forward the news.
- Print and distribute the attached National Resource Directory fact sheet. Visit the National Resource Directory at <http://www.NationalResourceDirectory.gov> to explore and sign up for RSS or e-mail updates about new content, events and features. Thanks in advance for your assistance. With your help, we can all provide access to these important resources for our Wounded Warriors, Veterans and their families.

Thanks in advance for your assistance. With your help, we can all provide access to these important resources for our Wounded Warriors, Veterans and their families.

Spring Holidays

- **Lent**
- **Mardi Gras**
- **St.Patrick's Day**
- **Spring Equinox**
- **April Fool's Day**
- **Palm Sunday**
- **Daylight Savings Time Begins**
- **Arbor Day**
- **Passover**
- **Good Friday**
- **Easter**
- **Earth Day**
- **Cinco de Mayo**
- **Administrative Assistants' Day**
- **Provider Appreciation Day**
- **Mother's Day**
- **Armed Forces Day**